



## Rumpole and the Penge Bungalow Murders

By John Mortimer

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In *Rumpole and the Penge Bungalow Murders*, John Mortimer tells the story of Rumpole's very first case. Looking back a half century into a very different world, Rumpole recalls a man accused of murdering his father and his father's friend with a pistol taken from a dead German pilot. It was this trial and its outcome that put Rumpole on the map and began to shape him into the eccentric and cantankerous defender of justice and reciter of poetry readers know and love. *Rumpole and the Penge Bungalow Murders* is a must read for every Rumpole fan and a compelling invitation to new readers to get to know Mortimer's addictive barrister.

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## **Rumpole and the Penge Bungalow Murders** By John Mortimer Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Mortimer's beloved barrister, Horace Rumpole, at last tells the tale, hitherto mentioned only in passing, of the Penge Bungalow murders, the case that made his reputation as a defense lawyer decades ago. Simon Jerold stands accused of shooting his father, a bomber pilot during WWII, and an RAF buddy of his father's some hours after a quarrel in which Simon threatened his father with a German Luger. Simon appears headed for the gallows with perfunctory defense from C.H. Wytan, Rumpole's by-the-book head of chambers. Leave it to young Rumpole, an inexperienced "white wig," to see a chink or two in the prosecution's case and step up to Simon's defense, even at the risk of ruffling his supercilious superior's feathers. Subplots include the farcical circumstances that lead the romantically challenged Rumpole to become engaged to Wytan's daughter, Hilda (aka "She Who Must Be Obeyed"), and his introduction to the felonious Timson family, one of whose hapless members he defends in an unrelated burglary trial—which incidentally provides a clue to a key motive of one of the principals in the murder case. If a British airman circa 1942 committing treason in the belief that Hitler was going to win the war isn't entirely convincing, Mortimer (*Rumpole and the Primrose Path*) never fails to delight.

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

For fans of this British crime fiction series, *Rumpole* is a must read. First introduced in a radio play 30 years ago, Rumpole has since populated 12 collections of Mortimer's short stories as well as a television series. This novel-memoir (the first long piece of fiction starring Rumpole) relates the backstory of the ornery trial lawyer's success, introduces readers to beloved characters, and answers questions about everything you ever wanted to know about Rumpole, including his predilections for wine, love, and criminal defense. "For anyone unfamiliar with this series," notes *The New York Times Book Review*, "here's a charming way to begin."

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From [Booklist](#)

\*Starred Review\* One of the longest-running jokes in series fiction has been Horace Rumpole's oft-repeated reference to his triumph in the Penge Bungalow case, which he defended in the Old Bailey "alone and without a leader." Fans long tantalized by references to the great legal case of the postwar years now can have a novel-length bath in it. Rumpole, shocked that the newbies in chambers have never heard of this case (they are even a little vague about the identity of Churchill, he feels), commits it to memoir. Mortimer thus gives us two Rumpoles here: the singularly acerbic old Rumpole, still moving through Chambers and the Old Bailey, but also wryly commenting on young "white wig" Rumpole--acerbic, fond of quoting Romantic poets, yes; but also ambitious ("craven," old Rumpole calls it); and very nervous. A lot of mysteries are cleared up along the way: for example, how the criminal family, the Timsons, first fell into Rumpole's lap; how his wife, Hilda ("She Who Must Be Obeyed"), first darkened his door; and the origin of the term "Chateau Thames Embankment." The Penge Bungalow case itself is a rip-snorter: two RAF fliers living next to each other in bungalows right after World War II are both murdered with a German pistol; the accused is the son of one of the victims. Masterful characterization and a spellbinding plot, filled with the arcane lore and intrigues of the Old Bailey, make this one a special treat for devoted Rumpoleans. *Connie Fletcher*  
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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Mark Gibson:**

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